

In the Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of accessing a web page from a publicly accessible internet device, comprising:

presenting an object to said device;

sensing said object with an optical sensor;

~~decoding~~ processing data produced by said optical sensor to yield an object identifier;

consulting a data structure to identify a web address corresponding to said object identifier;

consulting a data structure to determine whether said web address is among those sponsored by a third party, so that user access to a web page having such address should be permitted without charge;

~~consulting a first data structure associated to determine whether a web page corresponding to said object identifier is among those sponsored by a third party, so that user access to such web page is permitted without charge;~~

if so, linking to said web ~~page, said linking including consulting a second data structure to identify a web address corresponding to said object identifier, and directing a web browser to said~~ address; and

if not, soliciting payment information from a user before linking to said web ~~page~~ address; and

funding certain costs associated with providing the no-charge user linking to sponsored web pages by periodically charging said third party therefor.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 in which said first data structure is associated with a proxy server.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2 in which the proxy server is co-located with the device.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1 in which said first data structure is stored at a location remote from the device.

5. (Currently Amended) A method of accessing a networked resource from a device comprising:

presenting a physical object to ~~a an-optical~~ sensor associated with said device;

~~decoding an identifier encoded on said physical object from~~ determining a computer address corresponding to said physical object by reference to data produced by said ~~optical~~ sensor;

determining whether free user access to ~~a~~ said computer address related ~~to said identifier~~ is to be permitted; and

if so, linking said device to said computer address.

6. (Original) The method of claim 5 in which, if free access to the computer address is determined not to be permitted, informing a user that free access is not available and permitting the user to link to said computer address on a payment basis.

7. (Original) The method of claim 5 which includes accessing a database record in accordance with said identifier, and obtaining from said database record a computer address corresponding thereto.

8. (Original) The method of claim 5 in which said identifier comprises said computer address.

9. (Original) The method of claim 5 in which the decoding comprises decoding a barcode.

10. (Original) The method of claim 5 in which the decoding comprises decoding a digital watermark.

11. (Original) The method of claim 5 in which the computer address is a URL associated with a root domain, and if free linking to said address is permitted, then also permitting free linking to other URLs associated with said root domain.

12. (Original) The method of claim 5 in which the computer address is a URL associated with a root domain, and said determining includes comparing said root domain with a list of domains to which access is to be freely permitted.

13. (Original) The method of claim 5 in which said determining includes checking a list comprising address data to which free linking is permitted.

14. (Original) The method of claim 13 in which said list is stored in a data structure located remotely from said device.

15. (Original) The method of claim 14 which includes caching at least some data from said list at said device.

16. (Original) The method of claim 13 in which said list includes at least first and second domains, having first and second sponsors respectively associated therewith, the method further including billing the first sponsor for free user access provided to the first domain, and billing the second sponsor for free user access provided to the second domain.

17. (Original) The method of claim 5 that includes billing a sponsor a fee for access that is provided free to a user, wherein certain URLs associated with said sponsor are among computer addresses to which access is provided to users for free.

18. (Original) The method of claim 17 that includes:  
accessing a database record in accordance with said identifier;  
obtaining from said database record a computer address corresponding thereto;  
and  
providing at least some of said fee to an entity that maintains said database record.

19-31. (Canceled)

32. (New) A method of accessing a web page from a device comprising:  
identifying a web page that a user desires to view;  
checking whether said web page is in a class of web pages for which said device permits free viewing, said checking including checking a root domain of said desired web page against a data structure having stored therein a catalog of root domains;  
if said checking indicates that free viewing is permitted, then displaying said desired web page;  
if said checking does not indicate that free viewing is permitted, then soliciting payment from the user prior to displaying said desired web page.

33. (New) The method of claim 32 wherein said identifying includes:  
sensing data from an article presented to a sensor;  
producing an article identifier by reference to said sensed data;  
querying a data structure with said data that includes said article identifier; and  
receiving back from said data structure a web page address.